

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01840 102024Z
ACTION SS-25

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E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: THE UGT ISSUE MEETING WITH SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER

SUMMARY: AS A CONSEQUENCE OF IRVING BROWN'S RECENT SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH TOP SPANISH LEADERS INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ (MADRID 1216 AND PREVIOUS) REGARDING THE LABOR SITUATION, IT APPEARS THAT GOS MAY HAVE DECIDED, DESPITE ITS RESERVATIONS, TO OPEN THE WAY FOR THE SOCIALIST UGT TO OBTAIN CREDIT AGAINST THE FUTURE RETURN OF ASSETS CONFISCATED IN 1936. SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA (WHO HAD EARLIER MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH BROWN SEE MADRID 0954 AND PREVIOUS) ON MARCH 8 TOLD VISITING AFL-CIO OFFICIALS MIKE BOGGS, WHO CAME TO MADRID AT IRVING BROWN'S INSTANCE, AND JACK OTERO (BRAC) AND LABATT, THAT THE GOVT WAS WILLING TO GUARANTEE CERTAIN FUTURE PATRIMONY PAYMENTS (DUE THE UGT IN A WAY OF COMPENSATION FOR CONFISCATED UGT ASSETS) AGAINST WHICH THE UGT COULD OBTAIN CREDIT. PERHAPS THROUGH ICFTU CHANNELS. END SUMMARY.

1. DE LA MATA REITERATED TO THE VISITORS GOS CONCERNS
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REGARDING THE UGT. IT MUST CONCENTRATE ON BECOMING THE MAIN RALLYING PONT FOR NON COMMUNIST WORKERS, AND THE GOVT BELIEVED IT HAD THE POTENTIAL. THE AVERAGE SPANISH WORKER WAS NOT INTERESTED IN A COMMUNISTS ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT AND IT REMAINED FOR THE UGT TO MAKE THE DISTINCTION MUCH CLEAR BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC). IT MUST BE GOTTEN ACROSS TO

THE UGT THAT THEIR CURRENT "RADICAL" STANCE WILL NOT ATTRACT TODAY'S SPANISH WORKER WHO IS INTERESTED IN "THE GOOD LIFE" NOT POLITICAL AGITATION AND THE UGT OF 1936. SPECIFICALLY DE LA MATA REFERRED TO WHAT HE TERMED THE UGT'S POSTURE OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVT EXCESSIVELY RADICAL STATEMENTS THE STRESSING OF POLITICAL RATHER THAN BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES. AND COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE COS (THE NATIONAL "UNITY OF ACTION" MECHANISM GROUPING THE UGT, SWC AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO). THE MINISTER ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE UGT MUST SHOW MORE INDEPENDENCE AS A TRADE UNION. AND SHOULD NOT HAVE TO "TAKE ORDERS" FROM THE SPANISH SOCIALIST PARTY (PSOE) HE NOTED THAT IT HAD BEEN QUITE OBVIOUS IN THEIR RECENT CONTACTS WITH THE UGT THAT THE UNION WAS REFLECTING THE PSOE'S CONTACTS WITH THE UGT THAT THE UNION WAS REFLECTING THE PSOE'S ANNOYANCE WITH THE GOVT FOR ITS RECENT LEGALIZATION OF THE SPLINTER PSOE (HISTORICAL) FACTION. DE LA MATA ADDED THAT THE GOVT DID NOT RPT NOT OBJECT TO THE NATION CONNECTION "BETWEEN THE UGT AND THE PSOE NOTING THAT THE LATTER WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVE STRONG SUPPORT FROM WORKERS IN THE COMING JUNE ELECTIONS. HE JUST FELT THAT THE UGT, AS A TRADE UNION, SHOULD STAND SQUARELY ON ITS OWN FEET.

2. DE LA MATA SAID THE "DISMANTLING" OF THE OFFICIAL VERTICAL UNION STRUCTURE (SSP) COULD NOT OCCUR OVERNIGHT. THE GOVT COULD NOT AFFORD A VACUUM IN THE LABOR FIELD DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD AFTER LEGALIZATION OF THE OPPOSITION UNIONS (NOW EXPECTED BY MONTH'S END) THUS, ALTHOUGH TRADE UNIONISM WOULD BE THE PREROGATIVE OF THE NEW UNIONS. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVT WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN LABOR ORIENTED SOCIAL PROGRAMS (EDUCATION HEALTH ETC). BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE MANDATORY SSO UNION DUES (NOW TERMED "TAXES") WOULD BE PHASED OUT SLOWLY, SINCE PROSPECTIVE UNION MEMBERS WOULD OBJECT TO PAYING TWO DUES. THUS, THE UGT'S PERSISTENT DEMANDS THAT THE ENTIRE VERTICAL STRUCTURE BE TORN DOWN IMMEDIATELY WERE BOTH UNHELPFUL AND SHORTSIGHTED.

3. BOTH BOGGS AND OTERO TOLD THE MINISTER THEY APPRECIATED SOME OF THE GOVT'S CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO THE UGT. AND BOGGS ADDED THAT UNTIL RECENTLY, EVEN THE AFL-CIO HAD TREAD VERY GINGERLY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UGT. HOWEVER AT THIS POINT IN THE GAME, THE TIME ELEMENT WAS CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT. OTERO NOTED THAT NICOLAS REDONDO (UGT SEC GEN) HAD BEEN VERY DEJECTED WHEN HE HAD MET WITH THEM THE DAY BEFORE AND HAD TALKED OF HAVING TO REDUCE THE UGT'S SHOESTRING PERMANENT STAFF OF 23 BY MONTH'S END.

4. DE LA MATA SAID HE WOULD MOVE WITHIN THE WEEK TO NOTIFY

THE UGT VERY DISCREETLY THAT THE GOVT WAS WILLING TO COME FORTH WITH A UARANTEE OF FUTURE PAYMENTS AGAINST WHICH THE UGT COULD OBTAIN CREDIT. HE HOPED THAT THIS CREDIT COULD BE ARRANGED THROUGH ICFTU CHANNELS, AND STATED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THISTACTIC WITH ICFTU SECGEN OTTO KERSTEN DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO MADRID (MADRID 858) (WE UNDERSTAND FROM THE GERMAN EMBASSY THAT KERSTEN THOUGH HE HAD A PROMISE FROM DE LA MATA TO GO AHEAD.) HE SAID HE WOULD KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US, BOGGS UNDERTOOK TO NOTIFY IRVING BROWN IN PARIS, AND ALSO TO SEE TO IT THAT KERSTEN WAS ADVISED OF DE LA MATA'S DECISION. IN RESPONSE TO BOGG'S QUESTION, THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE WAS ALSO PREPARED TO GIVE APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE TO THE BASQUE STV (ICFTU MEMBERS, ALONG WITH THE UGT). HE THOUGHTHIGHLY OF THE STV AND BELIEVED IT COULD PAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE BASQUE REGION.EATON

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Message Attributes

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